

**WHAT IS CLAIMED:**

1. A method for monitoring electronic communications, comprising:
  - accessing communications from one of a chat room participant and an instant messaging (“IM”) participant;
  - analyzing content of the communications using at least one pattern recognition technique;
  - deciding whether a monitoring event has occurred based upon the analysis results and a set of predetermined rules; and
  - taking at least one predetermined action in response to said monitoring events.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the accessing, analyzing, deciding and taking are accomplished automatically.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined rules are stored in a database.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the database includes an SQL database.
5. The method of claim 3, wherein the predetermined rules include rules based on interactions with one of a chat room participant and an IM participant.

6. The method of claim 3, wherein the predetermined rules include rules based on interactions between non-chat room participants in a chat room.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the actions related to accessing, analyzing and deciding are not displayed to the chat room participant and the IM participant.
8. The method of claim 1, where the at least one predetermined actions includes at least one of informing the chat participant and the IM participant of a rule violation, informing the chat participant and the participant and the IM participant of a potentially dangerous situation, reporting a violation to a parent or guardian of the chat participant or the IM participant, reporting a violation or potential violation to an ISP, and blocking one of the chat room communications and the IM communications.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein reporting is accomplished via one of wireless communications, electronic mail communications and voice communications.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein the wireless communications includes one of cellular telephony and paging systems.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the monitoring event includes at least one of violation of a chat rule, an occurrence of a certain conversational content pattern and an occurrence of a predetermined conversational behavioral pattern.

12. A storage medium for storing computer executable code for on-line monitoring of electronic communications, comprising:

    a computer usable medium having computer programmable means embodied in the medium, the computer programmable means:

        accessing communications from one of a chat room participant and an IM participant;

        analyzing content of the communications using at least one pattern recognition technique;

        deciding whether a monitoring events have occurred based upon the analysis results and a set of predetermined rules; and

        taking at least predetermined action in response to an occurrence of the monitoring event.

13. The storage medium of claim 12, wherein the accessing, analyzing, deciding and taking are accomplished automatically.

14. The storage medium claim 12, wherein the predetermined rules are stored in a database.

15. The storage medium of claim 12, wherein the predetermined rules include rules based on interactions with the chat room participant or the IM participant.

16. The storage medium of claim 12, wherein the predetermined rules include rules based on interactions between non-chat room participants in a chat room.

17. The storage medium of claim 12, wherein the actions related to accessing, analyzing and deciding are not displayed to the chat room participant or the IM participant.

18. The storage medium of claim 12, where the predetermined actions include at least one of informing the chat participant or the IM participant of a rule violation, informing the chat participant or the IM participant of a potentially dangerous situation, reporting a violation to a parent or guardian of the chat participant or the IM participant, reporting a violation to an ISP, and blocking one of the chat room communications and the IM communications.

19. The storage medium of claim 18, wherein said reporting is accomplished via one of wireless communications, electronic mail communications and voice communications.

20. The storage medium of claim 12, wherein the monitoring event includes at least one of a violation of a chat rule, an occurrence of a predetermined conversational content pattern and an occurrence of a predetermined conversational behavioral pattern.

21. A system for on-line monitoring of Internet communications, comprising:

a system bus;

a central processing unit coupled to the system bus;

a memory coupled to the system bus; and

an I/O interface coupled to the system bus;

wherein the memory contains executable code to be processed by the central processing unit, the executable code causing the central processing unit to

access one or more communications from one of a chat room participant and a

instant messaging participant;

analyze content of the communications using a pattern recognition technique;

decide whether a monitoring event has occurred based upon the analysis results

and a set of predetermined rules; and take at least one predetermined action in response to said monitoring event.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein the system bus, central processing unit, memory and I/O interface form one of a server computer, a desktop computer and a laptop computer.

23. The system of claim 21, where the memory includes one of a read only memory and a random access memory.

24. The system of claim 21, comprising a secondary storage device coupled to the system bus.

25. The system of claim 24, wherein the secondary storage device includes a direct access storage device.

26. The system of claim 21, wherein the memory includes a rules module, a history module, a user history module and a report module.

27. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is implemented in one of a software implementation, a hardware implementation, a firmware implementation and/or a combination software and hardware implementation.

28. A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein, the computer readable program code means in said computer program product comprising means for causing a computer to:

access one or more communications from at least one of a participant and a chat room or instant messaging participants;

analyze content of the communications using a pattern recognition technique;  
decide whether a monitoring event has occurred based upon the analysis results  
and a set of predetermined rules; and  
take at least one predetermined action in response to said monitoring event.

29. The method of claim 1, wherein the analyzing is accomplished with a plurality of pattern  
recognition techniques operating in parallel.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the analysis results from the plurality of pattern  
recognizer techniques are simultaneously considered in said deciding.

31. The method of claim 1 wherein the pattern recognition techniques and/or the set of  
predetermined rules are dynamically updated.

32. The method of claim 31 wherein said dynamically updated occurs via one of manually,  
semi-automatically or automatically.

33. The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic communications include Internet  
communications.